

# Sexual Violence in Utah

## Annual Report, 2021



Three out of every four sexual assaults go unreported to police.



Those with a history of sexual violence have significantly worse health outcomes.



Utah rape rates are 33% higher than U.S. rape rates.



Half of those arrested for sexual violence perpetration are under the age of 25



In 2018, 11% of Utah adults said someone either had sex or tried to have sex with them without consent.



While sexual violence is common, it is also preventable through primary prevention strategies and policies. Primary prevention of sexual violence is being implemented in Utah communities.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sexual violence (SV) is defined as a range of non-consensual sexual behaviors which may be attempted or completed by a person/s who is harming another person/s. These non-consensual behaviors include forced penetration, alcohol/drug-facilitated penetration, penetration which occurs after a person is pressured verbally or through intimidation, unwanted sexual contact that does not involve penetration (e.g., groping), and non-contact unwanted sexual experiences (e.g., verbal sexual harassment).<sup>1</sup> Anyone can experience or perpetrate sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>

### Consent

The CDC defines consent as “words or overt actions by a person who is legally or functionally capable to give informed approval, indicating a freely given agreement to have sexual intercourse or sexual contact”.<sup>3</sup>

## Sexual Assaults and Abuse Go Unreported

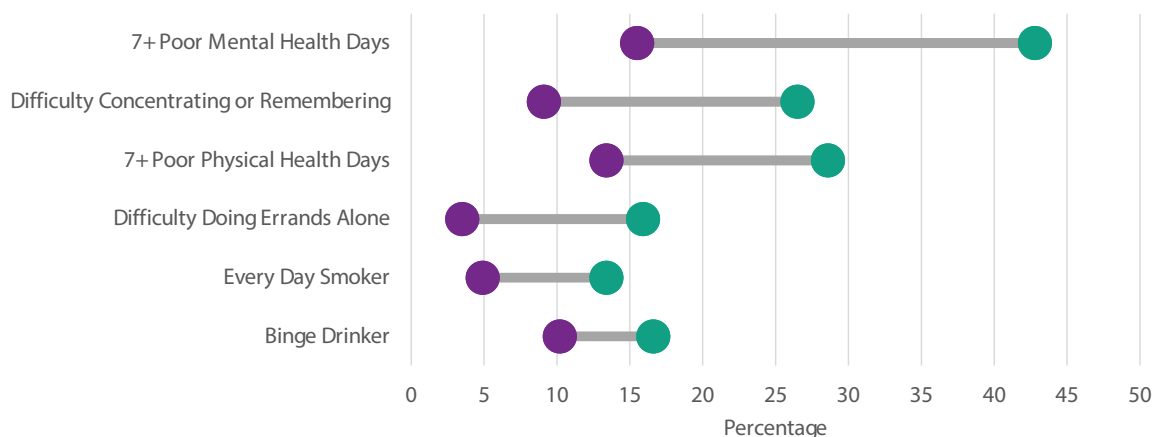
Unfortunately, three out of every four sexual assaults go unreported to police.<sup>4</sup> Many acts of sexual violence may go unreported because individuals fear retaliation, believe the police won't do anything to help, believe it was a personal matter, or didn't believe it was important enough to report.<sup>4</sup> Secondary victimization through a victim's negative interactions with the criminal justice system also contributes to under-reporting rates and can lead to increased feelings of trauma for someone who has experienced sexual violence.<sup>5</sup>

**Call to Action:** Change social norms that lead to stigma around reporting sexual assault and abuse. This may include harmful masculinity, bystander training, and community-centered media campaigns. Often individuals do not feel comfortable reporting incidents of sexual abuse; this may include reporting from men, children, or marginalized populations.

## Those Who Have Experienced Sexual Violence Have Worse Health Outcomes

Among Utah adults, those who have experienced sexual violence have significantly higher rates of negative health outcomes compared to those who have not experienced sexual violence. This includes includes higher reported rates of binge drinking (16.6% vs. 10.2%), smoking (13.4% vs. 4.9%), physical disabilities (15.9% vs. 3.5%), poor physical health (28.6% vs. 13.4%), mental disabilities (26.5% vs. 9.1%) and poor mental health (42.8% vs. 15.5%).<sup>2</sup> These negative health outcomes may be associated with the rape or attempted rape. Victims of sexual violence may have immediate effects as well as long-term devastating effects on their lives. The trauma resulting from sexual violence may disrupt the survivor's life in many ways—their ability to work, complete everyday tasks, or even stable personal relationships (**Figure 1**).<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1: Percentage of Utah Adults who Report Negative Health Outcomes, 2018.<sup>2</sup>**  
Utah Adults with a **History of Rape**  
Have Worse Health Outcomes  
Than Utah Adults with **No History of Rape**

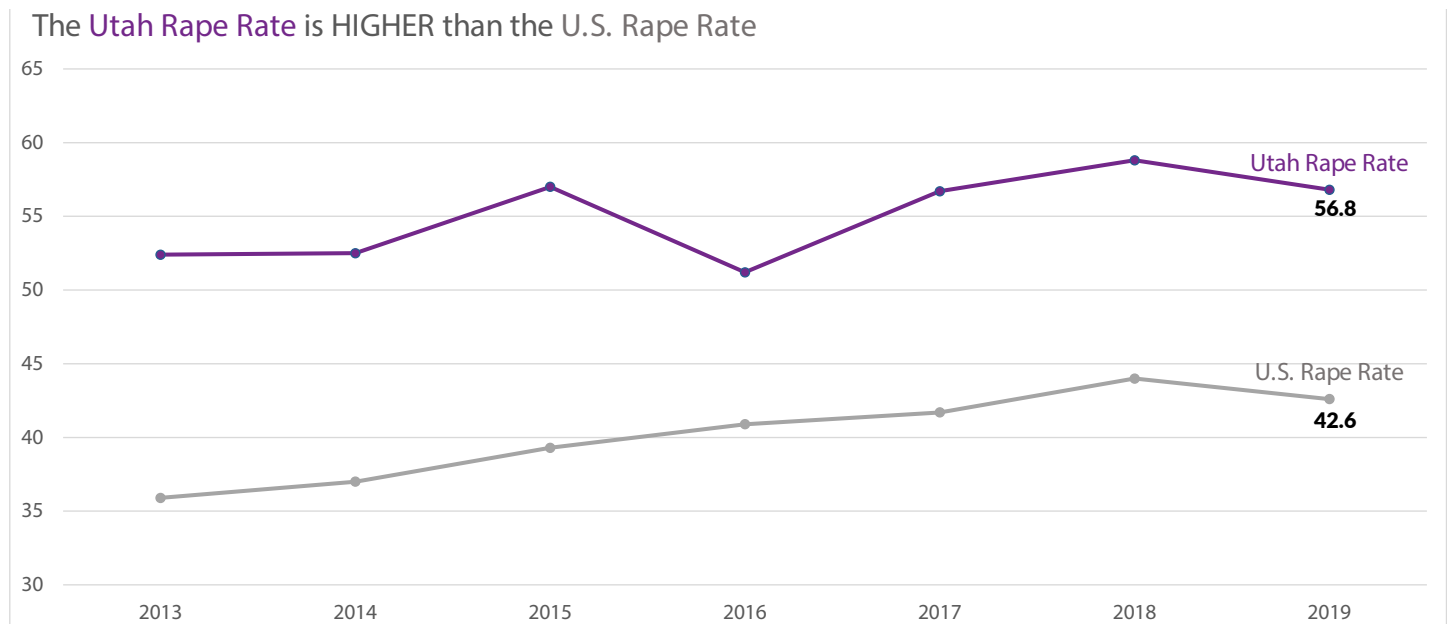


**Call to Action:** Ensure prevention efforts are accessible to all individuals. Programs and strategies can use a trauma-informed approach and reduce harm across communities. For more information on trauma-informed Utah, visit [www.traumainformedutah.org/](http://www.traumainformedutah.org/).

## Utah Rape Rates are Significantly Higher than U.S. Rape Rates

According to the Utah Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI), just one out of every three rape offenses in Utah were cleared in 2019,<sup>4,8</sup> meaning only about 33% of reported sexual assaults ended in arrest with charges and prosecution of a perpetrator. Approximately 50% of those arrested on sexual violence perpetration were younger than age of 25, and 97% were male.<sup>4,8</sup> Statistics vary because of differences in how rape is defined and how data is collected. The rape rate includes only those reported to law enforcement and is an underestimate of the actual rape rate. Some law enforcement agencies do not submit a full 12 months of data and some agencies do not submit any data at all.

**Figure 2. Utah and U.S. Crude Rape Rates\* per 100,000 Population, 2013-2019<sup>7</sup>**



\* Revised Rape Definition: penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.

**Call to Action:** Change social norms that lead to acceptance of violence, especially sexual violence. This may include reducing stigma, bystander training, and leadership opportunities for women and girls.

## Our Approach

### Priority Populations

The Utah Violence and Injury Prevention Program focuses on the following priority populations to reduce sexual violence:

- Communities with high burden of SV and perpetration
- Communities with a disproportionate burden of victimization
- Racial and ethnic minority populations (e.g. American Indian communities, Hispanic or Latinx)
- Underserved communities (e.g., LGBTQ+, juvenile justice)
- People who are disabled and their caregivers and their caregivers
- At-risk youth (e.g., foster care, system-involved youth)
- High tourism areas (service industry workers)
- Communities with large socioeconomic disparities and high health disparities
- Populations in rural or isolated geographically

**Call to Action:** Addressing health disparities and disproportionate burden is a priority to ultimately reduce sexual violence. Together with partner input, the Utah Violence and Injury Prevention Program utilizes national, state, and local data to identify these populations.

### Community Collaboration

The Utah Department of Health Violence and Injury Prevention Program (VIPP) has been strategically working with state-wide partners for over twenty years. VIPP has received federal and state funding to support the implementation of prevention efforts across Utah, including primary prevention.

## Primary Prevention

Traditional violence prevention has focused on secondary and tertiary responses and while these areas continue to be vitally important, primary prevention seeks to prevent violence before it occurs. It does so by focusing on reducing risk factors that increase the likelihood of violence and increasing protective factors that buffer or protect against risk. Public health's responsibility is to focus on root causes of negative health outcomes. For this reason, VIPP's focus, in collaboration with its community partners, is to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors for sexual violence.<sup>1</sup>

Primary Prevention	Secondary Prevention	Tertiary Prevention
Measures used before any sexual violence has occurred	An immediate response after sexual violence has been perpetrated	Long-term response after sexual violence perpetration
Prevent initial perpetration and victimization	Measures aimed at individuals who have perpetrated sexual violence or who have been victimized	Looks at lasting effects of victimization, attempts to minimize possibility of reoffense by perpetrators
Build environments that encourage well-being and healthy choices	Separate victim and perpetrator; provide immediate crisis counseling for victims	Provides ongoing counseling for victims; intervention in family violence; specialized sex offender treatment
Provide bystander trainings; social-emotional learning; teaching safe dating and relationship skills		

**Priority Risk Factors** are those factors which can increase someone's likelihood of experiencing or perpetrating violence.

**Risk factors** for experiencing sexual violence can include **social norms** that support sexual violence like **male superiority or sexual entitlement**. It may also may be due to **weak laws and policies** related to sexual violence and gender equity.

**Priority Protective Factors** are those factors which can protect against violence and risk of violence.

**Protective factors** to prevent sexual violence can include **gender equity policies and practices, community support** and social connectedness, or increased empathy or concern for others..

For more on priority risk and protective factors when it comes to sexual violence prevention, visit the CDC's Violence Prevention Center: [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html)

**Call to Action:** The Utah Violence and Injury Prevention Program and partners are committed to focusing on primary prevention and priority risk and protective factors to reduce sexual violence victimization and perpetration in our communities.

## Utah Rape Prevention and Education Subgrantees

### Sexual Violence Prevention Strategies

#### Promote social norms that protect against violence

- Bystander approaches
- Mobilize men and boys as allies
- Social norms campaigns

Athletes As Leaders™ program for girls

#### Teach skills to prevent sexual violence

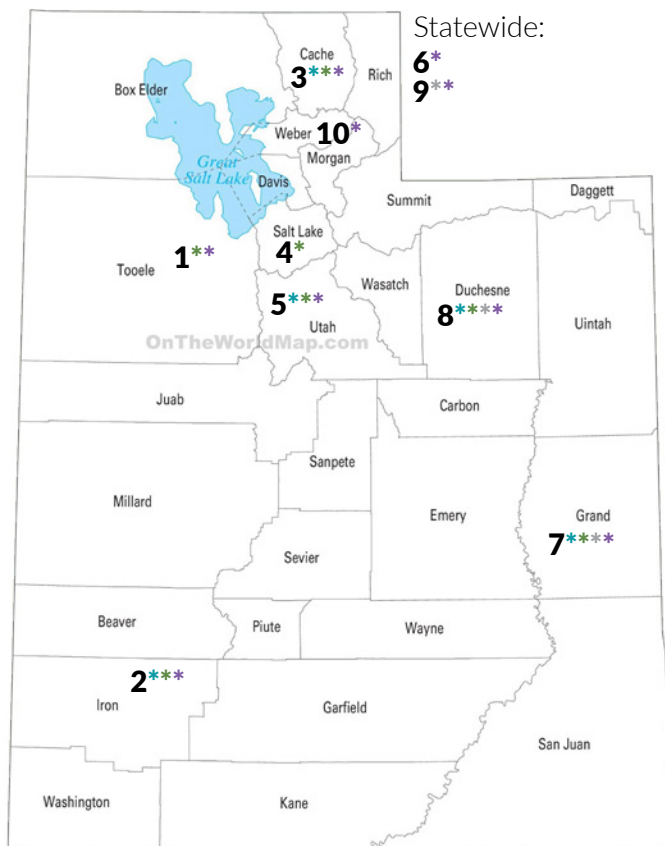
- Safe Dates™
- Healthy relationships curriculum

#### Provide opportunities for women and girls

- Workplace policies and supports
- Women's empowerment group
- Civic engagement

#### Create protective environments

- Built environment
- Policy
- Hot spot mapping
- Partnerships/ coalition development



#### Subgrantee (Priority population)

**1: Boys and Girls Club of Greater Salt Lake** (seven community clubs in Tooele, Salt Lake, and Carbon counties)

**2: Canyon Creek Services** (Youth and University, Beaver, Iron, & Garfield county coalitions)

**3: CAPSA** (Schools, coalition, youth council)

**4: Centro de la Familia** (Glendale community)

**5: Centro Hispano** (Youth, families, community partners, Latinx community)

**6: Division of Services for People with Disabilities** (Statewide, people who are disabled and service providers)

**7: Seekhaven** (Southeastern Utah, Native American population, local businesses)

**8: Tri-County Health Department** (Uintah and Duchesne counties, youth)

**9: UCASA** (Statewide, community partners, Spanish speaking communities, leaders)

**10: Weber-Morgan Health Department** (Weber and Morgan counties)



## Anonymous and Confidential Help 24/7

Utah Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1-888-421-1100

Utah Domestic Violence Link Line 1-800-897-LINK (5465)

National Domestic Violence Hotline thehotline.org, 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

## Resources

CDC Violence Prevention [cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/index.html)

Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA) [ucasa.org](https://ucasa.org)

UCASA's You are a Survivor app [www.ucasa.org/resources](https://www.ucasa.org/resources)

Utah Domestic Violence Council (UDVC) [www.udvc.org/](https://www.udvc.org/) or 801-521-5544

Utah Department of Health Violence & Injury Prevention Program [vipp.health.utah.gov/](https://vipp.health.utah.gov/)

## Criminal Codes

Sexual Offenses: [le.utah.gov/xcode/Title76/Chapter5/76-5-S406.html](https://legislature.utah.gov/xcode/Title76/Chapter5/76-5-S406.html)

Domestic Violence Offenses: [le.utah.gov/xcode/Title77/Chapter36/77-36-S1.1.html](https://legislature.utah.gov/xcode/Title77/Chapter36/77-36-S1.1.html)

In Utah, the age of consent is 18. Minors who are 16- or 17-years-old cannot consent to sexual activity with another person who is more than seven years older than them. (Utah Code 76-5-401.2)

Anyone who has reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected must notify the Utah Division of Child & Family Services (DCFS), a peace officer, or law enforcement agency. To report child abuse, call 1-855-323-3237. (Utah Code 62A-4a403)

Anyone who has reason to believe a vulnerable adult (elderly or disabled person) is being abused, neglected, or exploited must notify Adult Protective Services or the nearest law enforcement office. To report elderly or vulnerable person abuse, call 1-800-371-7897 or visit [daas.utah.gov/adult-protective-services](https://daas.utah.gov/adult-protective-services). (Utah Code 62A-3-305)

Any person who believes they are a victim of stalking may file a petition for a stalking injunction at the district court. A stalking injunction may be given regardless of the relationship with the stalker. [www.utcourts.gov/resources/forms/civilstalking](https://www.utcourts.gov/resources/forms/civilstalking) (Utah Statute 77-3a-101(2))

If a person has been harmed or fears harm by a relative, current or former cohabitant, someone they share a child with, or if the petitioner is pregnant by the respondent and is at least 16-years-old, married, or emancipated, that person may file a petition for a protective order at the district court. [www.utcourts.gov/abuse/information](https://www.utcourts.gov/abuse/information) (Utah Code 78B-7-105).

## Data Collection

To estimate the lifetime prevalence of sexual violence in Utah, individuals 18 years and older were asked questions from the Utah Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) about their experience with unwanted sex and includes times when the individual was unable to give consent. The BRFSS is a phone survey taken from a representative sample of the Utah population.<sup>2</sup> The demographic, socioeconomic, and health data is assessed at the time of the phone interview; the data collected on lifetime rape and attempted rape occurred at any point during the individual's life, therefore it is only possible to say the two outcomes are linked. Finally, this data are self-reported, and certain individuals maybe less likely to report.

Starting in 2013, the Federal Bureau of Investigation used the revised definition for adult forcible rape: penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim. Statistics vary because of differences in how rape is defined and how data is collected. The rape rate includes only those that have been reported to law enforcement and is an underestimate of the actual rape rate. Some law enforcement agencies do not submit a full 12 months of data and some agencies do not submit any data at all.<sup>7</sup>

## References

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8. Utah Department of Public Safety. Bureau of Criminal Identification. Accessed 1/15/2021: [bci.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/10/Crime-in-Utah-2019.pdf](https://bci.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/10/Crime-in-Utah-2019.pdf).

## Our Mission:

VIPP is a trusted and comprehensive resource for data and technical assistance related to violence and injury. This information helps promote partnerships and programs to prevent injuries and improve public health.